



March 27, 2009

Dear Member of Congress:

Health care reform is the most important step we can take to address the health care crisis facing millions of Americans, as well as to resolve one of the key factors threatening the long-term fiscal well-being of our nation.

Americans are working harder yet struggling more every day to afford health care and make ends meet. In recent years, health care costs have more than doubled while workers' wages remain stagnant. The rising costs and increased number of layoffs means 14,000 Americans lose their health coverage every day.<sup>i</sup> In 2004, half of all people filing for bankruptcy cited illness or medical bills as cause.<sup>ii</sup> And in 2008, nearly half of all people filing for home foreclosure also cited illness or medical bills as the cause.<sup>iii</sup>

Health care costs are one of the top cost pressures facing American businesses today, inhibiting job creation and hurting America's ability to compete in global markets. Workers, employers and the government all face rising health care costs which further shows the need for health care reform to lower costs, improve quality, create more consumer choice and expand accessibility.

American small businesses are the engine of our economy, and yet they continue to struggle with the cost of health insurance. Small businesses have seen their health insurance premiums increase 113% since 1999.<sup>iv</sup> To alleviate the devastating cost burden on small businesses we must reform America's broken health care system.<sup>v</sup> Skyrocketing health care costs are leaving Americans behind, straining government budgets and hurting the global competitiveness of employers. This burden will only get worse without action now.<sup>vi</sup>

To demonstrate the crushing impact health care costs force on every state, SEIU and AARP have produced Cost of Doing Nothing fact sheets for every state.

It is clear that the longer we wait, the worse the crisis will become. Now is the time to fix health care – so that all Americans have access to quality, affordable health care they can count on when they need it.

Sincerely,  
AARP  
SEIU

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<sup>i</sup> [http://www.americanprogressaction.org/issues/2009/02/health\\_in\\_crisis.html](http://www.americanprogressaction.org/issues/2009/02/health_in_crisis.html)

<sup>ii</sup> <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A9447-2005Feb8.html>

<sup>iii</sup> [http://works.bepress.com/christopher\\_robertson/2/](http://works.bepress.com/christopher_robertson/2/)

<sup>iv</sup> Kaiser Family Foundation & Health Research and Educational Trust, Annual Employer Health Benefits Survey, 1999-2007

<sup>v</sup> [http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2008/10/health\\_care\\_delivery.html/#overview](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2008/10/health_care_delivery.html/#overview)

<sup>vi</sup> <http://www.businessroundtable.org/sites/default/files/BRT%20Full%20Report%20Final.pdf>